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1.5c Chile Tightens Security, Fears Leftist Violence During Holidays

Chile's military government, concerned that leftists may resort to violence on the anniversary of Allende's overthrow (September 11), has tightened security.

Security officials are especially concerned for the safety of government leaders during the anniversary and the national holiday on September 18 and 19. Several sniper reportedly were seized from a group of leftists who were arrested for plotting to assassinate President Pinochet.

Nationwide police sweeps and mass arrests, aimed in part at ferretting out leftists, began in mid-July and are likely to be stepped up as the anniversary approaches. We have no information to support the charges of some Chileans that the

government is secretly killing prisoners despite its official policy against executions.

There has been much speculation in Chile that the first anniversary of military rule may feature some announcements on security measures and human rights. Pinochet recently stated that commutation or reduction of sentences for persons convicted of "lesser crimes" is under study, but ruled out a general amnesty.

The government's intentions may be disclosed when Pinochet holds a press conference next Wednesday. He may also indicate what the government plans to do with the Allende cabinet officers and the leftist party leaders held since the coup.